

Attention: Hope Stockwell

SENATE FISH AND GAME

EXHIBIT NO. 1DATE Jan. 8, 2009BILL NO. SB 59

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Senate Fish and Game Hearing Jan. 8, 2009

Chairman Barkus and Committee Members:

I am writing to oppose SB 59 as written. I believe ear marking the mountain lion trophy fees so that they must be used by the FWP Dept. to provide SUBSTANTIAL BENEFIT FOR MOUNTAIN LIONS is not a wise decision. Realize that ear marking could increase greatly in the future and for certain species such as wolves. Realize trophy fees could rise to very high levels.

Would it be too much to ask that the FWP Commission and Dept. to just utilize common sense, their required training, and to do excellent field work including data collection, compilation, analysis and reporting along with meeting with the public to manage our important wildlife species?

If this earmarking gets out of hand as it easily could the Dept. would have to have an earmarks division with more bureaucrats in offices. We need more and better work on the ground.

We have mountain lions from Mill Iron to Eureka and the Dept. has estimated 5,000-7,000 in just western Montana alone. The harvest is very conservative with only about 300 taken annually statewide.

Substantial benefit to mountain lions is an undefined term subject to lots of interpretations. For example some might see I and E to close the hunting season as a benefit to lions. Having more lions in towns and subdivisions might please lions with access to more domestic cats and dogs and running children. Having more mule deer instead of the relatively low populations in SW Montana might be good for lions. Would the trophy money be spent on better mule deer management?

I am a 5th generation native of Montana, former wildlife management and research biologist, former cattle rancher and 20 year general outfitter and present wildlife advisor and gift products manufacturer. I have closely observed the MT FG and FWP for 45 years. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Kill this bill.

Allen Schallenberger